

The holidays can bring joy and excitement, but they also can bring controversy to some workplaces. IFMA conducted a brief survey of its members in mid-November 2006 to see how organizations and their facilities staff contend with holiday decorating issues.

1. Does your organization decorate for the holidays?

93% Yes
7% No

2. What issues have emerged related to holiday décor?

- Making decorations non-denominational
- Live vs. artificial trees
- Safety hazards associated with lights, crock pots and trees
- Work disruption
- Individuals decorating workstations
- Cost

[Click here to see full list of issues](#)

3. What types of holiday decorations are typically displayed?

85% Christmas
24% Hanukkah
12% Kwanzaa
5% No holiday decorations displayed
18% Other

4. If your organization does not decorate, what is the main reason why?

65% To respect employees' personal beliefs
24% To avoid negative feedback
17% Cost
17% Policy issues
12% Lack of time

5. Have there been any complaints related to holiday décor that has led to policy changes?

85% Yes
15% No

[Click here to see complaints](#)

6. On average, how much does your organization spend annually on holiday decorations?

4%	\$0
17%	\$1 to \$250
12%	\$251 to \$500
15%	\$501 to \$1,000
24%	\$1,001 to \$5,000
18%	More than \$5,000
10%	Not sure

7. Are employees allowed to decorate their workspaces for the holidays?

94%	Yes
6%	No

8. Has this caused any issues?

75%	No
25%	Yes

- Lighting hazards, exceeding electrical loads
- Excessive decorations
- Damage to fixtures and furnishings

[Click here to see comments](#)

9. Any other interesting or unusual issues you've dealt with related to the holiday season?

[Click here to see comments](#)

10. Does your organization do anything special for:

Halloween

Parties, costume contests, candy, pumpkin carving, pot luck meals

Valentines Day

Ice cream socials, fundraisers for heart charities, candy and flower sales

St. Patrick's Day

Wear green, special cafeteria meals

Patriotic holidays

Display flags, encourage veterans to wear their uniforms, Veterans Day lunch for veterans, 4th of July picnics

Methodology:

The data for this study was collected using a web-based questionnaire. An e-mail invitation was sent to 2,823 U.S. and Canadian professional members of International Facility Management Association (IFMA) on Friday, November 17, 2006. The invitation

included a link where respondents could answer the short survey. Members responded quickly; the majority of the responses were received within four days of issuing the survey. A total of 428 surveys were deemed complete. The overall response rate was 15%. The margin of error at the 95% confidence interval for these questions is between + 4 and + 5 percentage points. This means that for a given statistic, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4% or 5% from the results that would have been obtained if a survey had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by this sample.

What issues have emerged related to holiday décor?

- *Trees and garlands.
- *Electrical devices plugged into cube outlets.
- *Crock Pot parties
- *Artificial snow.
- *Streamers and other things attached to ceiling grid and sprinkler heads.

- How much is enough?
- Staff decorates their work areas. Issues related to location of trees (egress), bad electrical light strings could cause fires, ceiling suspended decorations cause issues with sight lines to exit signs.

- Differences in cultural beliefs sometimes created controversial issues and hostility.
- Past holiday decor and even dress related to the Quanza holiday has been very disruptive.
- Standards had to be established as far as establishing restrictions to keep decorating, as well as music for all holidays to a minimum. This was established in order to maintain a conducive and professional working environment, instead of creating past disruptive atmospheres with employees constantly making decorations, which was very unprofessional and counterproductive to accomplishing work. In addition, the workplace constantly looked like a kindergarten room during every holiday, rather than a professional workplace.

- that it be fair and equitable and un-coerced by management
- that all events be in celebration not separation
- fire hazards to be avoided

- Whether we can have a live or an artificial tree.
- Where do we put the menorah?
- Do we want to decorate outside of our building?

- A few years ago, some employees objected to "angels" hanging on a tree. You were to select an angel and buy gifts for the needy. We have gone from lighted and decorated trees to wreaths and "Happy Holidays" banners.

- Against County policy (separation of church and state)
- All our holiday decorations are seasonal (red/green, poinsettias, etc.) and not religious in nature.
- All religions are represented
- Allergies to artificial trees and the nickel used in the frames.
- Allergies to real trees
- Although we do have a dress & decorum policy, individual staff will still decorate doors and cubicles to extreme, which is not in the policy. The issue is the use of internal resources to install and un-install decorations, as well as fire hazards. Also have staff wanting excess tables brought into their area for parties which takes away from the typical training areas. Even have had employees ask to borrow tables/chairs for their own personal events, which we do not support.
- Appropriateness do you offend others when only Christmas and Hanukkah are represented
- Appropriateness, messy areas, fire hazard
- As a government organization we have 2 large Christmas trees in our 2 main buildings that spotlight disadvantaged populations. Each agency or department may decorate as they choose. Almost every agency has 1 individual who decorates their cubicle to an extreme level - it's not very professional looking, but it is generally considered to be a morale booster, and is not discouraged or controlled.
- As a museum we have policies toward live plants, cut flowers or similar things that could be a carrier for pest to enter the building. In the past with some staff and rental

- clients this has caused some problems. We have also had issues where people wanted to bring in live Christmas trees which are not allowed by fire code in public buildings.
- As the lobby receptionist area gets smaller (partial conversion to rentable space), we have to reduce the size of Christmas tree on display.
 - Assistance with setting Christmas decorations.
 - Be inclusive, don't offend.
 - Being able to string Christmas lights in individual cubicles. We are a call center with 550 seats and it is against fire policy to have anything plugged in at the cubicles.
 - Being an international organization we keep the decorations to just a Christmas tree and plants so we do not offend any cultures who may not celebrate this holiday.
 - Candles... we've had to ban them due to fire danger.
 - Cannot have religious orientated decorations , i.e.: crosses , crèches , etc.
 - Can't be just Christmas. All groups need to be represented.
 - Christian versus other religious holidays
 - Christmas tree and menorah required.
 - Christmas trees - Real or fake, Religious beliefs, decorations, etc. Should the colors match our company logo? etc.
 - Clean-up after and storage of personal decorations.
 - Community expectations
 - Concern regarding sensitivity to diversity of religion/no religion.
 - Concerns for combustibility
 - Concerns over decorations with a religious connotations
 - Containing location, quantity and type of decorations to maintain safe work environment as well as giving equal opportunity for display to all religious believes.
 - Controlling the costs and being diverse to all cultures.
 - Coordinating volunteers
 - Corporate decorating is low key: artificial lighted Christmas trees that are raffled off to staff. However, a newer holiday decorating contest generates housekeeping, safety and security problems due to "over the top" nature of competition. Ends up causing bad feelings between departments and hassles for facilities staff but continues to be held!
 - Cost associated with decorating has resulted in significant cut backs. No lighting is allowed on trees in buildings.
 - Cost, consistency between bldg. locations, sensitivity to all holidays.
 - Cost, Religion, location, maintenance, prominence
 - Cultural issues safety concerns
 - Daisy chaining extension cords, running extension cords through doorways, hot lights, shedding from real pine wreaths.
 - Decorations to promote a festive look without looking like a specific religious holiday.
 - Decorative lights that employees forget to turn off when they leave for the day. Use of holiday decorations that are not flame retardant.
 - Departments doing too much of their own thing.
 - differences in religious-based practices
 - Different religions
 - Displays representing multiple year-end "holidays", including Christmas trees are in most of the lobbies, with the issue being which holidays to include and how to represent them.
 - Diversity
 - Diversity and Inclusion
 - Diversity is a big one.
 - Diversity is encouraged and celebrated throughout the year, with presentations, performances and information available to all staff. For the Christmas season Poinsettia plants are used in public area such as lobbies and cafeteria. These are supplied by the interior plant landscaper who is responsible for all interior plantings. Individual departments decorate reception areas, including artificial Christmas trees. Artificial Christmas trees are placed in main staff atrium.
 - Diversity Sensitivity
 - Diversity!
 - Do we decorate for Christmas or other holidays as well?

- Each office "does their own thing." No real issues to speak of.
- electrical issues; also, employees climbing on furniture to install ceiling decor
- Electrical lights, "overdoing" Christmas theme.
- Electrical usage by individuals at their workstations and for food tables with heating elements
- Employees decorating their workstations. Breaking standards.
- energy use
- Equal time for non Christian faiths. We set up a tree with lights and balls in corporate colors.
- Equity
- Expense
- extension cords
- Flammability of interior decorations
- Fire danger Energy Consumption Respect for others in diverse workplace
- Fire retardant trees, Live trees must be flame proofed, need to use proper extension cords for lights, actually getting staff to assist in the planning and decorating.
- Fire safety
- Fire safety with electrical decorations.
- Fire safety, clutter, electrical
- Fire safety, limited quantity, specified placement
- Fireproof vs. not.
- for safety not to hang decorations from the ceiling
- Generally try to avoid religious symbols in decorations - crèches, etc. - for seasonal items - poinsettias, lights, balls/ornaments.
- Hanging decorations from ceilings and Xmas light.
- Hanging decorations from suspended lighting. Open flame candles Tree lights to decorate workstations
- Hanging garland / ornaments from sprinkler heads! Blown breakers from plugging in to many lights!
- Hanging items from ceilings and lit trees.
- Holiday decor is usually put up at our headquarters office in Washington DC. As far as I know we do not decorate at our Dallas, Texas office, probably because we have all guys working out of this office and therefore don't really have any decorating issues. Personally, I like a lot of Christmas decorations. However, sometimes in the office it can be a distraction.
- Holiday decorations must be non-denominational - i.e.: snowflakes, not religious figures
- How decorations are affixed to surfaces. Electrical overloads and safety. Timely removal and clean up of decorations. Religious conflicts.
- how much to spend
- HR requests that we refer to events as "holiday" instead of Christmas
- Incorporating all religions without offending anyone.
- Individual departments decorate if they wish and property management decorates buildings but the company does not sponsor corporate decorations
- Individual departments may or may not decorate and is generally left up to the admin. Was is allowed is wrapping paper (or other items) hung on the fabric cube panels and potentially a tree (no light). All decorations must meet site safety standards.
- Individual departments/divisions decorate. So far, no issues.
- Individual employees over decorating cubes
- Issues have arisen regarding electrical decorations. We as a management team have a policy to only allow battery operated decorations.
- It left up to the departments to decide on what level of deco they do. Never to flashy!
- It needs to be far reaching covering all types of people.
- Keep "Christ" out of it.
- Keep it simple
- Keep the verbiage more towards the Holiday Season
- Keeping costs down.
- Keeping it non-religious in nature
- Keeping it religiously neutral.

- Labor for install and teardown
- Lack of any Christmas display, but still put up a Hanukkah display.
- Lack of spirit.
- Last year was the first time any one had a comment. They thought it was too "Christmassy"
- Less emphasis on the religious nature of Christmas
- lighting, hanging items from the ceiling
- Lighting, use of crock pots
- lights - we do not allow them
- Lights cost money. No decorations at all because it might offend some ONE.
- Lights on cubicles Electrical appliances (crock pots, food warmers) Hanging items from ceiling grid (standing on desks) Bringing combustible items into the building (straw)
- Lights on live trees or lights on cubicles
- Lights. We can't have lighted decorations.
- Live Christmas trees inside the building and against company safety codes
- Live poinsettias or not....
- Live trees Different relies beliefs
- Live trees in the work spaces. Holiday lighting on work stations and trees.
- Local fire codes require that cut Christmas trees be treated with fire retardant and a certificate stating so must be attached to the tree at all times. Staff will often remove the tag because it interferes with the tree decorations. I have had occasion to remove trees from the building for lack of a certificate. Holiday lights must be UL listed and approved. Staff will often bring their own to decorate their personal work space. Most retailers sell UL listed lights and this has not been a problem for me.
- Loss of ornaments.
- Mainly issues associated with hanging lights on workstations and the use of fresh-cut trees at our satellite offices.
- Mainly where can they plug Xmas lights Attaching to the ceiling
- Making sure we have a representation of Chanukah and Kwanzaa and not overdoing the Christmas theme.
- Meeting everyone's requirements regarding their specific holiday needs, by religion.
- Multi cultural
- Must be generic
- Must not offend
- Need to keep out religious symbols when decorating (like Nativity, angels, etc.)
- No Christmas Trees No religion symbols
- No issues that I am aware of
- No issues, but we are careful to have very generic decorations, i.e., nothing specifically religious.
- No live Christmas trees or wreaths - unless the wreath is outside the building. The facilities area purchases holiday flowers that are displayed in the lobby area only
- no live decorations
- No major issues. Once in a while we get questions about the electrical safety of holiday lights.
- No one wants anything to relate to religion
- No particular issues related to the facility. However, all greetings are carefully worded i.e.: Season's Greetings, Holiday Wishes, Best of the Season, etc.
- No real issues, department Holiday trees are put up by Facilities staff and decorated by department staff.
- No real issues. We put out Christmas and Hanukkah decorations in the reception area and poinsettias in floor elevator lobbies. If someone requested Kwanzaa decorations, we would provide them.
- No religious decorations, inc. Christmas Trees.
- No specific issues.
- No wreaths or religious items Simple trees with white lights
- Non denominational decorations vs. those who want the traditional elves and trees, despite our significant non Christian population. Cost and time spent decorating. Trip and fire hazards associated with decorating.
- Non sponsored decorations that are not fire resistant.

- none, only camera surveillance issues
- None, other than the decorations be non-living, as we are in a high-rise.
- None, recently, however Facilities has taken a more generic decorating approach, utilizing greens and poinsettias.
- None, we are sure to only use generic holiday decorations throughout the campus - outside lighting on trees, inside trees and wreaths throughout. Nothing that states "Merry Christmas", etc.
- None. Decorations are very generic in nature, i.e., winter season scenes, poinsettias, garland. No Christmas trees.
- None. Everyone is able to participate and it is a small office (30) so everyone can get involved to insure things are not left out or are done properly.
- None. We keep it simple; a tree (artificial) or two in the common areas, like the lobby and lunchroom.
- Not allowed to have a "decorated" tree - one w/ lights is ok - just no holiday decorations.
- nothing fresh because of allergies, no Christian symbols
- Nothing in particular - most issues have been about \$ = What cost center pays for what, and of course the ever present corp. cost cutting issues.
- Nothing new this year, but over the past several there has an emphasis on celebrating all of the holidays.
- Nothing significant
- Nothing yet, but all we use are trees and garland. No Nativity. We do have a Diversity Council and they plan a "Cultural Holiday Affair" that covers a multitude of celebrations. We just don't decorate for all of them.
- Only facility related issues like too many lights overloading circuits, etc.
- Only issue that has come up was with the fire marshal and having a real tree more than 14 days before Christmas.
- OTHER THAN TAKING AWAY FROM PRODUCTION., NONE REALLY
- Our Holiday Party had to be relocated to a different part of the building because of a re-roofing project and the possibility of leaks.
- People decorate their own departments if the manager approves. Nothing is done officially other than the purchase of poinsettias or something similar for the reception area.
- People feeling slighted because decorations only represent the Christian religion.
- playing favorites of one religion over another
- Poinsettias on Executive admin desk and not all admin desks.
- power issues safety issues
- Public agencies should not spend public funds for religious decorations. We limit to wreaths and "Happy Holiday" banners, preferably not all red and green with wreaths. Employee funds, if strictly from employees AND with some sort of "vote" among employees, can be used for religious decorations in worksites, but not for public display or on the exterior of the facilities. Purchased ads placed on our sites (e.g., buses) are not affected by any such restrictions. Private companies, of course, can spend any way they determine is legal. However, with the variety of religions represented in the workplace, discretion suggests some attempt at a broadly based holiday statement. Also, please note that Chanukah is NOT a holiday, but a religious festival commonly celebrated in the home, not as a public display of the religion. Similar sensibilities should be displayed for other religions, and at various times of the year.
- Putting lights on workstations, hanging items from ceiling grid
- Real versus artificial trees Lights on Christmas trees Individual departments decorating versus Lobby only
- real vs. artificial
- Really none. One employee suggested doing away with the decorations to cut cost, but the company already owns them.
- Religious concerns so we keep it away from any particular decorations that exhibit concerns (no angels, crosses, etc.)
- Religious considerations-equal representation versus non religious decorations.
- Religious themes Christmas vs. holiday

- Religious vs. secular decorations.
- Remembering to turn off the tree lights and office decoration at the end of the day. What are the "rules" for putting things on the office doors and walls?
- Safe power distribution (Christmas lights).
- Safety Awareness on what is allowed and what is not allowed in the building.
- Safety issues - electrical cords, CSA approved equipment/lighting, etc, tripping hazards,
- Safety issues related to lights and trip hazards.
- Safety issues with live trees, lights, etc.
- Sensitivities about discriminatory practice
- Separation of Church and State (public sector)
- Should be a non-religious decoration -- no trees just garland and bows.
- So far none
- Some discussions regarding what type of decorations, and whether to call it 'Christmas' or 'Holidays'.
- Some employee complaints re specific decorations
- Some employees do not want us to put up Christmas trees but rather just do general greens such as pine roping.
- Some Fire code interpretations were made regarding holiday decorations by the State Fire Marshall.
- Space in which to stage the decorations during installation and take down is always an issue.
- Stringing lights on cubes. Established a policy to prevent this in the future.
- That all beliefs are represented by the reception desk display.
- That to decorations are neutral and not really reflective of Christmas
- That we have a display for Hanukkah including a menorah but don't have any Christian representation of Christmas (nativity scene). We do have a Christmas Tree but no religious ornaments
- The company decorates outside and the lobbies. Employees can decorate their cubicle, but it must be tasteful and stay within their cubicle
- The decor should be tasteful and include both Christmas and Hanukkah decor.
- The decorating is decided on a department by department basis - some participate and some do not. There are no standards and no requirements to decorate.
- The expectation that maintenance staff will assist with the installation and removal of holiday decor.
- the need to recognize Jewish holiday traditions in addition to Christmas
- The organization as a whole does not decorate, but individuals decorate their immediate areas with Management approval. Issues in the past have been some concerns for overloading electrical circuits with too many lights, etc. within system furniture configurations.
- The use of Christmas vs. Holiday. We have elected to use "Christmas and Happy Holidays".
- There is general confusion over whether we should call it "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas".
- They cannot be religious in nature. Greens and pine cones are fine but that's about it
- This year nothing yet as we have established procedures during past years ...
- TIME - It takes at least 2 weeks and 2 men to set everything up. It is quite extensive but impressive. UPKEEP - Using ground fault receptacles create problems when it rains or snows. STORAGE - Where to put it the rest of the year.
- To my knowledge, no issues have emerged. Employees compliment the decorations.
- Too expensive. Program and costs have been reduced drastically in recent years.
- too tacky
- Try to keep it as generic as possible
- Trying not to over decorate and still keep it corporate looking.
- Trying to be sensitive to all people and not offend the majority at the same time
- Type, theme, quantity, cost
- Typical religious issues with folks who do not celebrate.
- Use of lights in the individual departments. Also, use of real hay bales at Halloween/Thanksgiving.

- Using Canadian taxpayers money for "nice-to-haves"
- Various religious groups make decorating difficult.
- Very sensitive and required to being non-religious in nature. We have to make it "seasonal" decorations
- We are decentralized, so the decision to decorate is based on each individual unit. Few issues arise - our units are monocultures, with some diversity, however, spiritual diversity does not come into play.
- We decorate for the season not any particular holiday. We attempt to make it non-denominational. We change out various foliage to more appropriate winter plants.
- We do a small tree. Usually set up in our board room. Employee's can put small decorations at their desks and some departments have their own tree and wreaths. The only issues I am aware of are departments that do have lighted decorations have occasionally forgotten to unplug them.
- We do minimal decorations on our meeting room floor only. We do put poinsettias on our other office floor. No issues have emerged.
- We do not allow any electrical use (i.e., lights, animated objects, etc.)
- We do seasonal decorations with evergreen trees, lights and poinsettias. Employees are allowed to decorate their spaces as long as they don't infringe on others. So far, no problems.
- We do very limited decorations, flowers only depending on when Hanukkah is we usually do two weeks of blue and white flowers for Hanukkah and the next two weeks of Dec. with mass flowers
- We have a 30 building campus. Departments and employees used to spend money and time decorating (inconsistently). Our Facility Services group took on this responsibility to manage holiday decorations. Simple tree/wreath/other arrangements at the visitor entrances and a sprinkle of poinsettia plants (for employees to take on New Years Day break) through the work space.
- We have a long standing policy on what decorations are acceptable. With the small amount we do in common areas we keep them as generic as possible.
- We have been asked not to call them Christmas trees which we ignore.
- We have staff from 27 different countries, encompassing various cultures and religions.
- We have to be sure that employees don't violate any fire codes.
- We just put a Christmas tree and we have had no problem.
- We no longer can have a large tree for the general office; however, each employee can decorate their work space as they choose.
- We only put out poinsettias
- We only use poinsettias, nothing related to Christmas
- We try not to do anything "religious". We put up a wreath, Christmas tree, we put up a Menorah, and we put up Kwanzaa Candles.
- We try to incorporate all religions. We have found in past years there has been more thought about "too much" Christmas. Currently, there is a change and a feeling that Christmas is absolutely fine. We try to keep away from red and green and offer opportunities for all religious groups to celebrate with overview from HR
- We use garlands and wreaths with white bows and ribbons. We stay away from the Christmas colors of red and green.
- We use minimal decor that is "holiday" friendly without signifying any particular holiday.
- We used to always have a live Christmas tree in each lobby and reception area. After many years of no issues, I had one person inform me they were allergic to live trees, so that caused us discontinue them and purchasing artificial trees. Which work out better, easier in long run from a maintenance standpoint? I had anticipated going to artificial soon anyway as it seems the required fire retardant chemicals were smelling noticeably stronger and taking much longer to dissipate.
- We very specifically call things "winter holiday" not Christmas.
- We're a 2nd-tier government organization with a very diverse population. The Cities in our Region do decorate, but we do not publicly. Decoration is by individual business units voluntarily within the office space. You'll see small, fake Christmas trees and individual office spaces decorated by staff, but nothing done by department.

- What to do with the poinsettias once the season is over...
- Where to place decorations
- Whether to let employees have individual decorations in their office area, especially lights.
- Who does the decorating? My services group has been severely cut so sometimes I hire someone to decorate the company lobby tree. Secretaries decorate their own areas. If someone is seen decorating, it is taken as not having enough work.
- "Why don't we decorate the site?"

Have there been any complaints related to holiday décor that has led to policy changes?

- All decorations must be basic - garland, wreaths, poinsettias, and trees - with no religious connotations include any religious
- A few individuals are hung up on what the holidays are about and don't want to do away with any celebration ref. religious beliefs,
- A wreath arrangement had the appearance of a cross and had to be removed
- Adding menorah and Kwanzaa displays years ago
- Allergy complaints on real wreaths and trees
- Atheist has been offended by the prayer before our Holiday meal.
- Christmas decorations only are not inclusive.
- Christmas tree and red/green colors had to be changed to reflect more non-traditional decor
- Christmas vs. Happy Holidays
- Decorations with fire hazards.
- Diversity - A religion or group not represented.
- Due to safety issues, we went with battery operated only
- Either too much "Christmas" or too little
- Energy consumption and fire danger
- Fire hazard issues with electrical appliances and lights
- Health & Safety committee concerned about safety of installations.
- Had to include more Hanukkah decorations
- I think that it's been driven more by concern of potential complaints rather than responding to actual complaints
- Individually, wanting more or do their own thing.
- Live plants and pest being carried in with them
- Live trees and fire hazard
- Location and size of displays
- Majority rules
- Merchants association complained that we were not participating in seasonal decorating
- Minimize expenditures and energy consumption
- No one is ever happy so we do nothing.
- No open flame candles allowed
- No symbols
- No trees, no nativity scenes
- Not allowed to use extension chords longer than 6 feet
- Not doing it caused a stir
- Nothing related to religion specific
- Objections to Christian iconography
- Only that it meets safety standards
- Originally, they were felt to be too "Christmassy", so we made them more "holiday" or just "winter"
- Our Christmas tree is now a holiday tree with banners stating holiday greetings in 20 different languages
- Patients from around the world with culturally diverse beliefs have led to keeping it festive and simple.
- Recognize ALL holidays and not just Christmas
- Religious in nature. All religions alleged to not be represented equally, so some were unhappy
- Religious, and limits
- Restrict use of live plants and electrified decorations as well as not offending employee of other religious orientation.
- Some complaints that we decorate for Christmas, but do recognize other holidays.
- Too much in some depts.
- Too much X-mas stuff
- Total apathy

- Tree was decorated too childish one year.
- Trees are associated to Christianity so trees are not allowed as a decoration
- We purchased an artificial tree.
- We tried a Native American theme one year. People missed the elves.

Issues caused by employees decorating workstations

- Appropriateness, messy areas, fire hazard
- Can create some damage to cleaning tiles, cleaning issues, etc.
- Christmas Lights in cubes - fire hazard
- Damage to walls, ceilings
- Distraction
- Electric lights and usual people going overboard and spilling out into the common areas (8)
- Employee decorations are limited and so very little concern is expressed by others.
- Employees wish to decorate their workstations
- Fire and life safety issues (6)
- Forgetting to turn off or unplug Christmas lights when they leave for the day
- Had to tell employee to remove lights
- Hanging items from the ceiling (2)
- Hazard prevention
- Holes in walls. Tape taking paint off of walls.
- Inappropriate decorations - items hanging from ceiling tile, electrical items plugged into furniture systems
- Just clutter issues
- Just small problems -- tape on painted walls, etc.
- Lack of ability to personalize space
- Lights in workstations, decorations taped to walls.
- Lights plugged into cube outlets, small trees, artificial snow etc.
- Limited decorations to inside cubes only.
- Live Christmas trees and electrical hazards (2)
- Location of some decorations has been an issue.
- Looks unsightly, fire hazards
- Mainly votive type candles
- Not allowed: Decorations hanging from ceiling, electrical lights, and no real hay.
- Noted in previous question.
- Occasional complaints about over doing decorations or proximity to life safety devices and obstructing egress
- only allowed to do so minimally
- Only minimal decorating is allowed, as it may be offensive to employees of other cultures. Too much decorating can be counterproductive to working conditions, as well as a work distraction to others
- Only within their cubicle
- Pinning lights to workstations or blocking aisles
- Power and safety (7)
- produces an unorganized image of the University
- public vs. private space distinction
- Related to fire safety re lights and live plants.
- Religious pictures of Mary & Jesus
- Rumbly but they are ignored.
- Some are overdone and not tasteful
- Some employees hang things from the ceiling
- Some employees just overdo it
- Some go overboard on lights
- Some personal decorations have been allowed, such as displaying cards, ribbons. Strung lights were removed which caused some resentment towards management.
- Sometimes they plug items into their stations that pull too much power.
- Specific rules - not disruptive (noise), not electrical lights (battery OK if checked by engineering), no candles or incense
- Strings of lights being left on over night. (3)
- They do it anyway, which we do not enforce policy unless it is distasteful or in patient area.
- too excessive
- too much electric power, too annoying

- Unsafe displays
- Use of lights in individual areas.
- Using proper ways to attach decorations, no lights allowed
- We cannot stop people from personal expressions but we monitor the amount and ask that it be respectful of those around them
- We do not allow anything electrical.
- We had to ban the use of miniature lights in cubicles because of perceived fire hazard.
- We have one Jehovah Witness employee who complained when the employee who shares a common wall in their cubicle hung a string of lights.
- We have specified that no electrical decorations are allowed.
- We no longer allow real trees and wreaths not supplied by the company. Nor do we allow hanging of anything from the ceiling. Departments can use artificial trees and supply own decorations.
- We stopped allowing electric Christmas lights and candles
- Who turns off the lights?

Interesting and unusual issues related to the holiday season

- There have been some complaints about disrespecting the majority religion and grumbling about "those xxx" who can't stand being in the minority -- or some such blather that is expected from some segments of the workforce.
- Departments setting up buffets and wanting to leave the treats out for days.
- Using ceiling grid and sprinkler heads to attach decoration to.
- Setting up crock pot parties without checking electrical capacity, tripping breakers and getting upset with maintenance staff when we can't help.
- A controversial issue with an employee from a different culture felt that another employee with a 1-foot Christmas tree on their desk in plain view should remove this item, as it was offensive to this employee from another culture. The final result was that the employee with the tree was asked to take it out of plain view of the hallway, where it was seen by everyone walking by this employee's cube. Following this incident and several meetings with HR officials, restrictions were then implemented to keep decorating in the workplace, as well as employee offices and cube spaces to a minimum. Employees were also counseled at that time about cultural sensitivity issues and respect to others.
- A poorly hung 60" diameter wreath fell 2 days after hanging 12 feet above a seating area, on a non-Christian couple, enwreathing them but not invoking any holiday spirit!
- Actually in our company, many of the departments make it an annual contest using it as an employee motivational tool. So far they seem to be very successful. They often ask Facilities to participate as a judge.
- Actually, we encourage workspace decorations and judge them and award prizes for different categories (like most original, funniest, etc)
- Allergic reaction to holiday live plants
- Allergies to pine. We now have to use only artificial decor
- Any decorations in bad taste or makes the office/cubicle look unprofessional, the items have to be removed
- As clarification, we do not allow lights any place except in the Capitol Rotunda. Otherwise, the offices are allowed a tree. If it is live, it must be sprayed and tagged with a flame retardant.
- As long as decorations of cubicle spaces are in moderation and good taste, they are allowed. We do not allow individuals to have lighted decorations as that would go against our energy policy. We have had almost no issues or problems. (1,100 employees)
- At a time when our company is looking at deeply cut budgets for operations, I am amazed that we are approved to spend more money on expanding the Cultural Affair and other traditions that were cut for budgetary reasons years ago.
- Be sure all your Chanukah candles are lit and lit properly.....short circuits!!!
- Because employees know we'll give them the poinsettias, many will tag or try to take 'their' plant prior to the time or be very upset if another employee has taken the plant.
- Biggest problem is always the holiday party: making it both nice enough and affordable enough for a very diverse workforce. Government cannot spend taxpayer's money for the party: everything must come from the personal pockets of management & staff.
- Bringing in kids to tour decorated spaces
- Buildings in outlying areas undoubtedly do their own version of decorating. The truth is that we're as likely to deal with hunting memorabilia in the fall as we are holiday items.
- Christmas music over Muzak was eliminated due to possible religious content or tone.
- Concerns about flammability of decorations and also irritating colleagues with overly loud Christmas parties, music etc.
- Departmental parties can have minor issues: kitchen congestion, electrical for crock pots, and reserving lunchroom space.
- Each year a citizen of Nebraska donates a live tree to be displayed in the Capitol Rotunda. Our Grounds crew travels to the site cuts the tree brings it into the Capitol and decorates it. It does take a substantial amount of labor to accomplish this task.

- Employee workspace decorations are not allowed to be lighted.
- Employees over doing it. We don't allow lights or anything that plugs into power. Halloween can get out of hand. Employees have brought in bails of straw and corn stalks. Cobb web spray is messy and hanging stuff from the ceiling is a problem. Stuff hanging from the ceiling never gets completely removed.
- Employees wish we put up more decorations.
- Fake snow in cubicles - cleaning staff do not appreciate the mess
- Giving trees, food drives, anything that gives back to the community is very popular.
- I have associates that want to bring in trees for their departments. The rule of thumb is, if it fits on your desktop you can bring it in. The major issue is the amount of food related parties and since I oversee catering I had to set guidelines for my services.
- If the focus is kept on the general holiday spirit and fun (and away from religion) it usually goes pretty smoothly.
- In specific workspaces, individual people can do whatever they want. If it's the Dept. doing the decorating -- then they're expected to cover both Christmas and Hanukkah.
- Issues re: onsite and after work holiday parties.
- It is the number one time of the year that petty thieves tend to target our private buildings.
- Most decorations are done by depts. the parent company provides garland and poinsettias.
- One of the rooms in one of my buildings has a vaulted ceiling (45 feet) and holiday balloons will get loose and getting them down is a pain.
- Our decorations do not include any specific Christian icons such as a cross or nativity scene - just Christmas tree/gift boxes/snowman, etc. We try to include some non-Christian activities such as singers for Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. We once had a "Christian magician" that grossed people out with pulling a bloody rabbit out of a hat. I think it was supposed to have something to do with Christ on the cross. He has been unofficially banned.
- Our employees are very diverse and very respectful of one another's beliefs and views.
- Our holiday contractor told us we were the only facility they worked on that has a manger.
- Our holiday decorations are so great, that many of our associates bring in their families to see them. Many of them use our setting to take their Holiday Photos. I have been here 14 years and we have never had an issue over "Holiday Decor"
- Our office participates in a wreath building contest sponsored by a local charity and those wreaths decorate our office.
- People getting "holiday rage" over extended exposure to singing bass and similar noisemakers.
- Potlucks - they're a drain on manpower resources (setups/teardowns), and a drain on our cafeteria income.
- Power failures extinguishing the Menorah have created concern among our Jewish residents.
- Responsibility for decoration storage (where departments have purchased their own decorations) becomes an annual issue.
- Scotch tape is every where and damages finishes. Repair costs involved.
- Some employees bring in their own live trees which can present a fire safety issue.
- The annual letter acknowledges all faiths at this "Holiday Season"
- The completely "wrapped" cubicle. Being Furniture coordinator, I was surprised when I happened upon the totally foil wrapped workstation; every panel of the 8 x 8 station was wrapped in foil! Wish I had a picture!
- The holiday party is called the winter party and not formally recognized as having anything to do with any holiday
- The interesting thing is that there have been no interesting or unusual issues!
- The University of Colorado has implemented a ban on "holiday" parties to as not offend anyone or any groups. Parties are permitted if they include an employee appreciation element.
- Theft of exterior light strings. Corporation decorates public and common areas, staff do their own work zones.

- There is a "chairman's" holiday party late in the afternoon on one business day near Christmas.
- Trying to bring in live Christmas trees and trying to hang stuff from the lighting and ceiling.
- Until last year we had some live decorations, such as bows and plants but we had allergic reactions to them and had to cut them for this year.
- We allow employees to decorate their cubes or areas provided they follow our guide lines.
- We allow minimal decorating of cubes/offices. But, no candles/flames, and anything electric must be "approved" by our corporate maintenance staff - e.g., must be UL listed, etc.
- We also celebrate numerous international holidays throughout the year.
- We call our office gathering a Holiday Party now and have P.C. invites.
- We do not allow any electrical decorations and we send out a policy reminder concerning how they can decorate their cubicle.
- We do not allow departments/groups to bring in smoke machines, only Disc Jockey's for music. In the past the smoke machines have set off the smoke/alarm system in the buildings.
- We don't call it Christmas, we call it Holiday Season.
- We don't have dedicated staff to do this, and it's usually left to the receptionist and some helpers at the front lobby, and the custodian in the lunchroom. We decorate only inside, not on the exterior.
- We have a holiday decorating competition with prizes - by groups, not individuals. We also raffle off items for charity and have drawings for gift items. We have a company holiday party, and a holiday lunch for everyone near Thanksgiving.
- We have a policy that we are allowed to display holiday decorations as long as there are no religious themes incorporated into the decorations.
- We have an online FAQ to help employees remember what is appropriate/safe for holiday decorations.
- We have holiday parties at all of our facilities for all personnel - try to keep it low key
- We have received complaints for not recognizing some religious groups. The trees are decorated without any religious ornaments. Items related to Kwanza and Hanukah are displayed only in lobbies of each building.
- We issue guidelines re: decorating. We conduct a contest each year, awarding prizes to the best departmental decorations. We judge this contest, and find ways to award a lot of prizes. People enjoy this activity, and Facilities only has to decorate the common areas.
- We try and get people to limit food in the offices because of rodents and bugs but people don't always comply. We allow holiday decorations as long as they use no electricity.
- We try to keep holidays neutral-- we call them holidays, rather than referring to any particular one. This is in an effort to offend no one.
- We try to make a point of making it a seasonal celebration as opposed to a religious one
- We used to call it a Christmas Party and have it off site, but now it is called a Holiday Party. The party is held onsite for employees only.
- We used to have contests for which floor had the best decorations but our upper management now does not approve. We gave up the company Christmas party years ago and only upper management has one.
- We usually host a Pot Luck Lunch for the employees as we have a very diverse and multi-cultural workplace. The only decorations we put up is a Christmas Tree in a main area of the office and the employees are able to modestly decorate their individual workstations.
- We've had good success. It's a clear morale booster. Department parties, lunches, etc.
- We've had to limit types of decor due to power and safety.
- When we decorated for Christmas, specifically, Hanukkah became an issue. When we put out a Menorah, lighting the candles (electric bulbs) on the right day, at the right time, in the right order became the issue.